

## The Cycle of Racial Socialization

(adapted from Adams et al., 2023 & Singh, 2019)

**Purpose:**

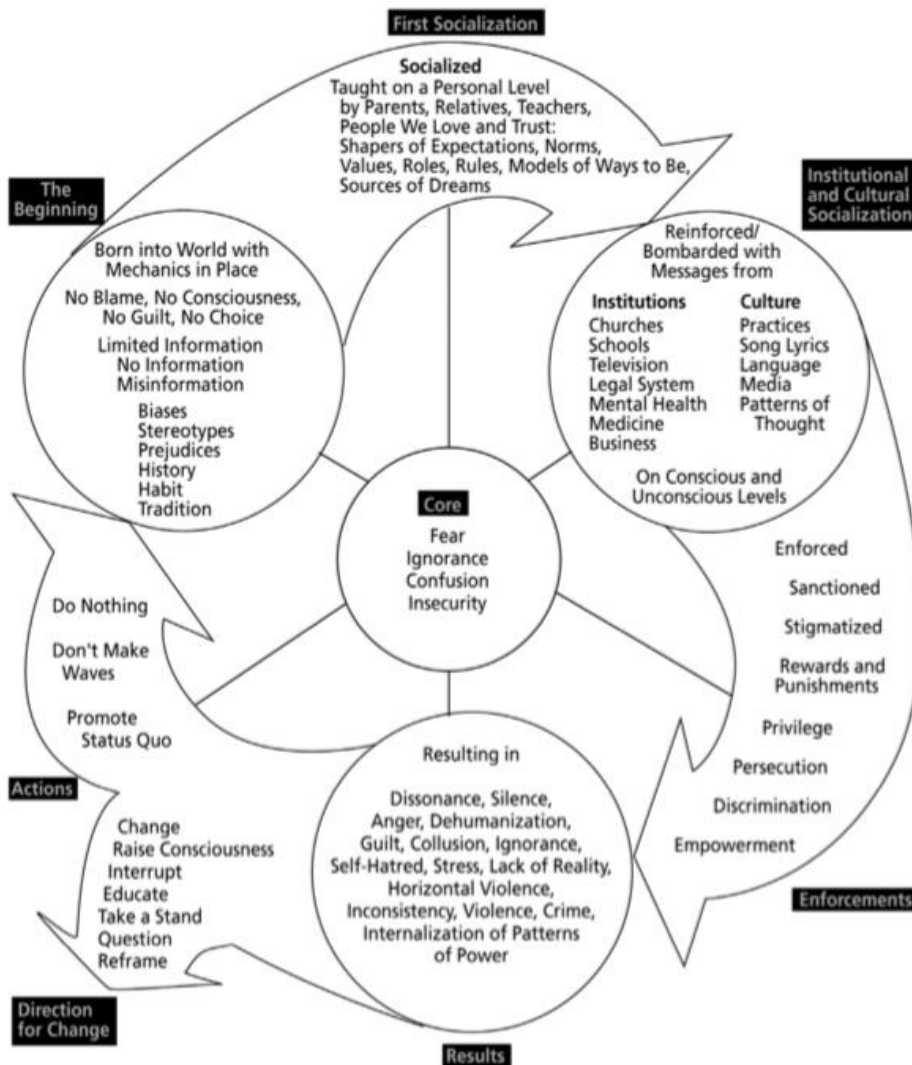
- Explore the messages and narratives about race and racism that were conveyed to you in your formative experiences and relationships.
- Consider how these early experiences informed (or continue to inform) your understanding of race and racism.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Identify how family members, peers, and community members contributed to how you perceive or experience race and racism.
- Increase your awareness about the narratives and scripts that reproduce stereotypes, cause “othering,” or uphold white dominant norms.
- Reflect on your racial socialization in musical settings.

**Procedure:**

1. Read [“The Cycle of Socialization” by Bobbie Harro \(2013\)](#)
2. Refer to this diagram in the questions that follow:



3. Respond to these writing prompts based on your own racial socialization:
- a. **The beginning:** we are born into a world with preexisting racial scripts that are carried out and/or resisted by those who raise us. What were the racial scripts of those who raised you?
  - b. **First socialization:** our loved ones and trusted adults who raise us teach us racial scripts through unspoken or unwritten rules. Racial scripts can also be conveyed through explicit messages about your race or other racial groups. The absence or prevalence of people from a certain racial group creates the setting for your racial script. What was the racial script that you were taught? How did that messaging look, sound, or feel?
  - c. **Institutional and cultural socialization:** as we grow up, we receive racial messaging from sources beyond our family and closest communities. We are delivered racial scripts in school, religious institutions, media sources, health care systems, legal systems, and more. We are also exposed to culture-specific content, customs, and trends that reinforce our racialized identities. The absence or prevalence of certain racial groups in these settings continues to shape our racial scripts. How was your racial script reinforced through institutional or cultural norms?
    - i. **Consider your musical socialization.** What messaging did you receive about music in schools? What music did you hear in popular media? How was music a part of your cultural socialization? What kinds of music were included or excluded from your music education?
  - d. **Enforcements:** You receive praise and rewards for acting out your racial script and punishments for resisting them. You can also receive praise and rewards for assimilating into white dominant norms. How were your racial scripts revised and reinforced through racial privilege, stigma, discrimination, and/or oppression? How did you act in accordance with your racial script? How did you resist your racial script?
    - i. **Consider your musical socialization.** What racial scripts were privileged in your music education? To what extent did you receive praise or punishment based on the enactment of your racial script in musical settings?
  - e. **Results:** You are a part of the overall system of racism which confines and dehumanizes all of us in different ways. The socialization of racism can manifest as dissonance, silence, self-hatred, guilt, shame, anger, and violence. In what ways have you been limited by racism? How does your racial socialization show up in your actions, behaviors, perceptions, and interactions?
    - i. **Consider your music teaching practices.** How do feelings of dissonance, self-hatred, guilt, shame, or anger as a result of racism impact your ability to teach? What feelings do you need to heal from in order to be a better teacher?